

## *Bidens pilosa* (Compositae)



**English name:** Blackjack

**Botany:** Grows up to 1 metre, has a 4 angled furrowed stem, yellowish flower heads with white petals. Leaves are divided into 3 leaflets toothed along the edge. Fruits are black with 2 – 4 hooked bristles which attach to clothes and animal hair.

**Uses:**

- a) To **stop bleeding**, squeeze the juice out of the leaves. (Arua, Uganda)
- b) For **wounds**, squeeze the juice out of the leaves and add salt. It acts like iodine. (Kisubi, Uganda)
- c) For **measles**, make a tea of the leaves and flowers (Masaka, Uganda)
- d) The crushed fruit can be **added to medicines as a preservative** (Masaka, Uganda)
- e) **Septic wounds:** Dry the leaves, pound and sprinkle onto the wound (Zimbabwe)
- f) **Herpes zoster:** use leaf juice (Zimbabwe)



**From TICAH, “Using our traditions: A herbal and nutritional guide for Kenyan families”:**

**Ear infections:** Crush the leaves and use 1 drop in each ear twice daily

**Eye infections:** Crush the leaves and use 1 drop in each eye three times daily for 3 days

**Constipation:** Take one whole plant and crush the above ground parts. Make an infusion with 1 litre of water and allow to stand for 10-15 minutes. Adults should drink one dose of ½ a glass. Children correspondingly less.

**To keep wounds clean**, including boils once they have burst: Crush the leaves and put 1 drop of juice into the wound.

**From Rehema Namyalo, Kiriya, Masaka, Uganda:**

For **big cuts especially fresh cuts or wounds**, crush the leaves, squeeze the juice onto the cut and wrap the residues onto the wound as a compress to hold the flesh together. Repeat twice a day until the wound has healed.

For **abscesses and painful insect bites**, e.g. of wasps and bees, crush the leaves and wrap them as a cold compress twice a day until the pain has gone or the abscess has healed.

For **nutrition**, eat the leaves as a vegetable, they are rich in iron therefore help to prevent anaemia.

**Anaemia:** Make tea as a decoction of the seeds. Drink half a cup 3 times daily for 7 days. This treatment works fast.

For **chronic ulcers (gastric, peptic, intestinal or duodenal ulcers):**

- a) make a decoction of the whole plant by boiling one handful in 1 litre of water for 3-5 minutes, then drink half a cup 3 times a day for 7 to 10 days.
- b) make an infusion of 1 teaspoonful of dry leaf powder in 1 cup (500mls) of hot water, leave to steep for 15 minutes and drink the whole cup. Repeat 3 times a day for 10 to 14 days.

Note: If these ulcers cause excessive heat in the stomach, leave the tea to cool and drink it cold.

**Skin infections** and when *Candida albicans* in the bowels causes serious itching, make a decoction by boiling one handful of the whole plant in one litre of water for 5 minutes. Wash the affected area, and then smear an ointment from the leaves of *Bidens pilosa*. Repeat twice a day.

**Disclaimer:** Discover has compiled this information with the best possible interests of its readership at heart. Discover cannot be held responsible for any negative consequence of following the procedures described in this paper.